

April 4, 2011

RE: H.B. 6641 – Letter of Support

Dear Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee,

As a coalition of labor unions, community advocates and concerned constituents, we write in strong support of *HB No. 6641: An Act Concerning the Use of Credit Reports in Employment Decisions*, Rep. Lesser's bill to restrict the use of credit history in employment decisions.

In the midst of record-high unemployment and ongoing foreclosures, sixty percent of employers recently surveyed by the Society for Human Resource Management report that they run credit checks on job applicants. This practice irreparably harms Connecticut workers and our state's economy despite strong evidence that credit checks have *no* validity in predicting job performance. Now, when Connecticut families face the worst economic crisis of our generation, is the time for our leaders to ensure that employment discrimination has no place in our economic recovery.

The Connecticut Center for a New Economy, and our allies at Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut; Connecticut Citizen Action Group; National Employment Law Project; The CT AFL-CIO; National Alliance on Mental Illness – CT; Keep the Promise Coalition; and Greater Hartford Legal Aid strongly urge you to take this important step toward fairness, equality, and economic recovery by ending employment discrimination based on credit history. Credit checks in employment put job seekers in a Catch-22, in which they can't pay their bills because they don't have a job, but they can't get a job because they can't pay their bills.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has recently sued two employers over this practice, acknowledging that it has a discriminatory impact against African American and Latino applicants. In addition to this, the impact of employment credit checks on women, recent immigrants, senior citizens and people with disabilities has not been disclosed by the credit reporting industry, but these groups have suffered financially from outside factors such as unequal pay, job discrimination and medical debt. This bill is a concrete step toward ensuring that employment discrimination not play a part in our economic recovery.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Renae Reese, Executive Director, Connecticut Center for a New Economy

And the following organizations:

Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut, Connecticut Citizen Action Group, National Employment Law Project, The CT AFL-CIO, National Alliance on Mental Illness – CT, Keep the Promise Coalition, and Greater Hartford Legal Aid.